


ABRAHAM LINCOLN



An Address by George Turner

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One who would take in the grandeur and sublimity of a great mountain must look at it from afar, so that its individual features are swallowed up in the majestic whole. The same rule prevails proximately with respect to a mental picture of a great man or an important event. The senses are charmed by the exciting and dramatic in human affairs as well as by the sublime and beautiful in nature. But much that is valuable to contemplate in the life of Abraham Lincoln would be lost if consideration were given alone to the events that exhibited him at the height of his career and amid the stirring scenes of the war for the Union which he brought to a successful conclusion and signalized, in the end, by "that last full measure of devotion," eulogized in his Gettysburg address. He was never in personal appearance or bearing a dramatic figure at any period of his career, and after his elevation to the presidency he took care to avoid the pomp and circumstance usually associated with greatness. But in great mental and moral attributes, and in that something that makes exceptional men sufficient unto themselves under every stress and in every crisis, he was a giant among men, towering above his fellows as some great mountain towers above the foothills that surround and guard its base. These great qualities, and the dramatic and tragic events which exhibited them during the closing years of his life, must not be lost sight of if we would visualize the majestic outline that his career presents to history. But if we would know the man, which is more important than a vivid picture, we must look at his beginning, and note the successive steps that made him

at last the chosen leader of the nation in its hour of utmost peril and greatest need. I propose, with your permission, to pursue this last course in the development of my subject.

Abraham Lincoln in his character, his attainments and his personality, was an evolution, a natural outgrowth, of free American institution, and the sociological conditions that they produced. His life and career would have been impossible in any other country. Born there to poverty and obscurity, he would have lived and died unheralded and unsung. But, fortunately, he was born in a land of freedom, where opportunity sits at the right hand of all by right of organic law, and he was reared, if that term can be properly used with respect to his upbringing, in that particular part of the land where democratic equality was most deeply ingrained, and man measured, solely and alone, by the inherent qualities of his head and heart. There, surrounded in his family by the most pitiless poverty, inured during his minority to the hardest and meanest toil, he reached manhood with as meagre an equipment for greatness and distinction, judged by educational and social standards, as was ever possessed by man. We know that he was without schooling, save and except the simplest rudiments that he had picked up at night before the fire in his father's cabin; that he had been thrown on the world without a dollar, to make his way as best he could; that he was without friends to advance his fortunes by a single hair's breadth; and, to make the outlook more discouraging, that he was awkward and ungainly in his person, and remained so through his whole life. But, as against these adventitious drawbacks, he was a young giant in physical strength, with a mind attuned to deep poetic conceptions, and with a moral nature as sweet and fresh and uncontaminated as the birds that summoned him every morning to his day of hard and un-

remitting toil. He had a fund of common sense that approached genius, a high sense of humor, and an imperturbable good nature that was rarely disturbed. He was also brave and self reliant, and he had been taught by the social organism surrounding him, that he started in the race of life the equal of any of his fellows, no matter how highly placed in wealth or social position. But it would be a mistake to suppose that he harbored in the beginning any great ambition. Conscious of the poverty of his attainments, it is doubtful if he had any conception of a life before him other than that which he had theretofore lived, a life of labor and toil, to be blessed by possible but slow acquisitions, by wife and children, by the respect of his neighbors, and in the end to be gathered peacefully to his fathers as his fathers before him had been gathered to theirs. So he went out from the squalid home that he had known from childhood to do his part in the great unknown world, and to accept cheerfully and courageously the good and ill that it held for him. What he was at that time and had been as a boy is thus told by his step-mother, who lived until after his tragic death, a venerable woman possessing the homely virtues of her time and station, to whom undoubtedly he was indebted for the fundamentals of character that marked his after life. She said:

“Abe was a good boy, and I can say what one woman—a mother—can say in a thousand: Abe never gave me a cross word or look, and never refused, in fact or appearance, to do anything I requested him. I never gave him a cross word in my life. His mind and mine—what little I had—seemed to run together. He was here after he was elected President. He was a dutiful son to me, always; I think he loved me truly. I had a son, John, who was raised with Abe. Both were good boys, but I must say, both being now dead, that Abe was the best boy I ever saw, or expect to see.”

This simple testimony from the loving and sorrowing heart of a mother in Israel is the finest tribute that could have been paid him, and it gives a key to his character that explains the possibility of his extraordinary career.

The first few years of adult manhood were spent much like those of his early boyhood—working as a farm hand, splitting rails, clearing and fencing the rude homesteads of his neighbors, flatboating on the Mississippi River, clerking in a village store—in short, doing anything that came to his hand, but whatever he was called to do, doing it well and honestly. It was at this time that he earned the subriquet of honest Abe, a name that became a political slogan in after years and carried him to the highest and most distinguished honor and trust that it was within the power of the American people to confer and impose. During those early and laborious years he made friends of all with whom he came in contact. His primacy in the rough and uncouth sports of the day, his unfailing fund of humor, and facility in expressing it, coupled with his rugged honesty and strong common sense, soon made him a neighborhood leader sought after and consulted on all occasions, whether of business or pleasure. Possibly at this time he may have had an inkling of a larger leadership that was to come to him. At any rate, when he was twenty-two years of age he aspired to the legislature, but was interrupted in that aspiration by the Black Hawk war, for which he enlisted in a company raised in his neighborhood, of which company, to his surprise, he was elected captain. He said many times afterwards, that no honor that had ever come to him gratified him so much as that early honor conferred on him by his immediate neighbors. Before that, however, he had made an announcement of his candidacy and a statement of his views on the questions of the day. The concluding paragraph of

that announcement exhibits the modesty, good sense and good taste that marked all his public utterances throughout his life, and in its indirect but powerful appeal it also marked the acute sense always exhibited by him of the psychology of the human mind. The announcement concluded in these words:

“Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say, for one, that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellowmen, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition is yet to be developed. I am young and unknown to many of you. I was born, and have ever remained, in the most humble walks of life. I have no wealthy or popular relations or friends to recommend me. My case is thrown exclusively on the independent voters of the country; and, if elected they will have conferred a favor upon me for which I shall be unremitting in my labors to compensate. But, if the good people in their wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointments to be very much chagrined.”

The raw and inexperienced youth of twenty-two who could write that gave much indeed of promise to the future.

After a few weeks' service in the Black Hawk war, in which nobody distinguished himself very much, but in which he had done the part assigned him with courage and assiduity, he returned home and pressed his announced candidacy for the legislature, but was defeated, although running far ahead of his party strength. He again became a candidate at the next election and was successful, and then succeeded himself for a number of terms. His legislative service was useful but not particularly brilliant. But it brought him in contact with the prominent men of the state, most of them young and cultivated, with whom he measured himself, not

entirely to his own disadvantage, and it fixed in him the resolve to make himself their equal in intellectual attainments as he had found himself to be in natural endowments.

Up to the time of his emancipation from parental control, but few books came in his way, but such as he could get he greedily devoured. Among these were the Bible, Aesops Fables, Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress, and Weem's Life of Washington. With more freedom, especially after his employment as a clerk, came a thirst for more knowledge, a fact noted by his associates and friends, who assisted him with the loan of books and with helpful advice. At this time he borrowed Kirkham's Grammar, and with the assistance of the village school-master, perfected himself, as far as that work would enable him to do, in that branch of education. Now, after his experience in the legislature, he set to himself seriously the task of self education. He studied other branches of learning, and read books of history, science, poetry, and everything else within his reach that would cultivate the mind. About the same time he resolved to become a lawyer, and while improving his mind generally, perfected himself in the study of the law and was admitted to the bar; but this step in his advancement did not come until he had reached the age of twenty-seven years.

From this time forward we find him associating on terms of entire intellectual equality with the ablest men in the state of Illinois, many of them college and university graduates, governors, senators, judges, and notable lawyers. His time was spent in the practice of the profession of the law, and in that vocation, we are told, he soon had no superior in the state. While not a fluent orator, nor graceful in delivery, his diction was excellent and his logical arrangement unsurpassed. Among a galaxy of orators, jurists and statesmen belonging to the

Whig party of that day, most of whom had then acquired, or later acquired, national fame, he became easily the first, both in party counsels and in the exposition of party principles. For many years he led the Whig electoral ticket in Illinois and in every campaign was the most prominent expositor of its principles on the stump. In 1846 he was elected to congress, but retired at the expiration of his first term, not desiring re-election. If his career had ceased at this point it would constitute a prodigy to make men wonder. A barefoot boy, born to the bitterest poverty, and thrown upon the world without education and without friends, had arisen by his own unaided exertions in a few years until he had become the first man in a state full of great men, to whom he spoke with the authority of a leader and in words which none of them could surpass. It will be valuable to stop at this time and inquire how it was possible to achieve so much from such an unpromising, such an almost impossible, beginning. It has been ascribed to divine inspiration; to the setting up, by the Almighty, of an inspired instrumentality to work out the divine will in a grave crisis in the country's history. But it does not seem to me necessary to go so far. To find his equal in mental and moral endowments, and in courage, resolution and ambition to succeed, would be hard indeed, yet if a young man so endowed could be found, he might, I believe, become all that Mr. Lincoln was and do all that he did under similar conditions. Rural communities in this country in that day, and indeed most of them in this day, partake of the nature of universities in which knowledge in all its branches is freely dispensed. A spirit of democratic equality promotes free social intercourse, and invites all to come in and partake of the intellectual pabulum that the community table affords. Intellectual and moral development is thereby stimulated, and it only requires ambition, assiduity in study, and social qualities

that invite helpful assistance, to develop the raw and inexperienced youth into a fairly accomplished and self-reliant man of the world, capable of holding his own in all the exigencies with which time and circumstance may confront him. There are many depths of knowledge that such an education does not touch. A man, even of great ability, so educated, goes through life feeling the lack of fundamentals which another, possessing them, does not prize, but which, if he possessed them, would place his feet on a solid foundation, and make him invincible at the bar, on the bench, in the pulpit or in the forum. In one respect, however, such an education has an advantage over that of the college or university. It is not a cloistered education. It is acquired as part of an active, busy life. Precept and example go hand in hand, and fit the individual, as precept alone cannot do, to meet the eventualities of life as they unfold themselves before him from day to day. At any rate, such was the education and training of Abraham Lincoln. He always called himself an uneducated man; yet his education fitted him at an early age for the leadership of a great party in a great state, and it made him in the maturity of his powers, and at a time when great mental and moral powers were required, the chosen and accepted leader of a great nation. If we reject the theory that he was raised up by the Almighty as an inspired instrumentality, we cannot reject the theory that being an instrumentality fitted for the purpose, the divine hand so disposed events that our nation in its hour of need was enabled to avail itself of his unrivaled powers of head and heart.

He had always been an opponent of human slavery, although not an extremist like Garrison and Phillips. The free institutions organized and guaranteed by the Federal Constitution were his first thought and his supremest love. If the blot of slavery could be wiped out without breaking that great instrument or seriously

impairing it, he wanted it done. But, with or without slavery, he wanted to preserve the Union of the states, that the great experiment of free government inaugurated by the Fathers might not prove a failure, and thereby set back human liberty at large for untold generations. It was in this frame of mind that he approached political crisis of 1860, when the pro-slavery party, fortified by the Dred Scott decision, was preparing to force African slavery into the Territories and eventually, as many feared, through the instrumentality of judge-made law, into all the free states of the Union. He entered into that contest on the side of human liberty with all the force and power of his great mind and heart. Hitherto his reputation had been state wide. Now it became nation wide. His debates with Mr. Douglas in 1858 brought his name and fame to the attention of every lover of liberty in the land, with the result that he became in the campaign of 1860 the candidate of the republican party for president. It was a memorable political struggle, causing intense excitement throughout the land, and arousing strong passions on both sides that nothing could still but the hand of war and the misery of desolation. The republican party was successful and Abraham Lincoln became the sixteenth President of the United States.

And now we have followed the friendless, barefoot boy until he has reached the pinnacle of human ambition; he sits in the seat of Washington, and is the chief magistrate of a nation of sixty millions of free men. How did the transition affect him in his habits and modes of thought, in his introspective measurement of himself, in his capacity to see clearly, to judge correctly, to decide justly? If we can determine from the unanimous testimony of all observers, friend and foe alike, the answer must be, not at all. He was the same modest, unassuming, right minded, clear headed, open hearted,

resolute soul—no more and no less—that he had always been. He was confronted immediately with a great war for the preservation of the Union, and with foreign and domestic problems of the utmost difficulty on which the very life of the nation depended. The task before him was one to try the powers of seasoned statesmanship, fortified by the widest reading and the largest experience. He entered upon it, not, indeed, with arrogant self-sufficiency, because such a state of mind was foreign to his nature, but with the assured confidence with which he had undertaken and carried through every work that had come to his hands. That he was exalted in soul by the supreme trust and inspired thereby with a sense of his sufficiency to meet its requirements, is undoubtedly true. He surrounded himself with a cabinet composed of the most eminent men in the nation, but at the council table, after full discussion, his was the voice that decided every question, foreign and domestic. This was because he felt the responsibility that had come to him, and that it was his alone to deal with under the favor of God and the advice of the friends of freedom and nationality. That he knew his own mind, and would not delegate the great trust with which he had been charged, was soon made known to those who surrounded him. When Mr. Seward, presuming on his inexperience, wrote him within a month after his inauguration, complaining of the want of a fixed foreign and domestic policy, and saying that it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct such a policy incessantly, winding up with the naive suggestion, "It is not my especial province, but I neither seek to evade or assume responsibility," Mr. Lincoln replied in effect with his usual placid good nature, that it was his business and would be his pleasure to pursue and direct any policy or policies that might be adopted. Again, when Mr. Seward, who was easily, by long service and popular acclaim,

the first statesman of the day, wrote a bellicose dispatch to Great Britain and France, Mr. Lincoln calmly blue penciled it, muttering as he did so that one war at a time was all he wanted on his hands. But while he was firm and decided he was never self-willed or opinionated. In the direction of the war he was always amenable to advice and correction. His letters to McClellan, Hooker and Burnside, are models of confidence and loyal support, only withdrawn after they had proven their incompetency. His support of Grant was never withdrawn, and when a committee of temperance advocates complained to him that Grant drank to excess, he replied humorously: "Gentlemen, I wish you would find out the brand of whiskey Grant drinks. I want to send a barrel to each of my other generals." With Stanton, the great war minister, who was directing the war and had all its threads in his hands, he would never make an issue. When it was brought to his attention by a disappointed suitor that Stanton had refused to obey a written order given by him, he remarked with a twinkle in his eye that he had very little influence with this administration but hoped to have more with the next.

And so it went throughout the entire four years of that bitter struggle, sanity and strength ever marking his course, both in the assertion of his just prerogative and in that self-effacement which is at times the greatest evidence of strength; his only weakness a tenderness of heart, of which his generals complained, in the matter of military offenses, but a weakness that brought balm to many an innocent heart yearning anxiously for loved ones in the extended and far flung battle line of the republic.

He was oppressed throughout the entire struggle with the angry and conflicting insistence of professed friends, some of whom thought he was not proceeding

fast enough and others that he was proceeding too fast. With all such he dealt with the canny wisdom that was natural to him and that his life experience had seasoned and ripened. When reasoning and expostulation failed he would turn the argument with a funny story, and thus avoid the wrath that blunt opposition would have been likely to provoke.

There has been much speculation as to his religious belief. While not an adherent of any Christian creed, his faith in an omnipotent hand that rules all things was firm and strong. His state papers abound with declarations of his faith in and reliance on a just and righteous God.

He had long debated with himself the propriety of a proclamation emancipating the slaves. He was also being urged to that step by the abolitionists of the North and warned against it by the Union men of the border states. The state of his mind on the subject is exhibited in his reply to a rabid attack made on him by Mr. Greeley in the New York Tribune: "If," said he, "there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union." But he had been coming more and more to the view that an emancipation proclamation, if

not a necessary, was at least a desirable war measure, and he called his cabinet together on September 22, 1862, and announced to the members his purpose to issue such a proclamation. He said to them, among other things, as recorded by Secretary Chase:

“When the rebel army was at Frederick I determined as soon as it should be driven out of Maryland, to issue a proclamation of emancipation, such as I thought most likely to be useful. I said nothing to anyone, but I made the promise to myself and to my maker. The rebel army is now driven out, and I am going to fulfill that promise. I have got you together to hear what I have written down. I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself. This I say without intending anything but respect for any one of you.”

This measure, which was consummated the first day of the succeeding January, and which gained him the title of the great liberator, was, as we see from his own statement, a covenant with Almighty God, which he felt obligated to carry out and fulfill, and against which he would listen to no argument, even from his chosen advisers. Such a man must have been filled with veneration for Almighty God, and with reverent faith in His power for good. If, in the multiplicity of creeds, he was unable to fasten his faith to any one of them, who can doubt that the Omnipotent being, whose charity is as broad and mercy as infinite as the universe, received him into His bosom on the last great day as one of the elect of mankind?

The lineaments of his face, limned at that time, are now familiar to every school boy in the civilized world. Their normal cast is that of profound melancholy, as if he were brooding over the miseries of his fellowmen. There was much in his situation to induce such a state of mind. The tribulations of the war, the disappointment

of early defeats, the complaints of unsuccessful generals, who affected to believe that they had not been properly supported, the everlasting and importunate and contradictory urgings and promptings of professed friends, the heavy burden of life and death lodged in his hands in the matter of military offenses usually punishable with death, and finally, at the climax of the struggle, the tidings of death and desolation coming to him incessantly and on the wings of lightning from the bloodstained battlefields of the South, all had their effect to cast down his mind and bow down his soul. In this humble and contrite frame of mind, it was a melancholy pleasure to him to repeat the opening lines of his favorite poem:

“O! Why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a swift fleeting meteor, like a fast flying cloud,
Like a flash of lightning, like a break of the wave,
Man passes from life to his death in the grave.”

His only safety valve was his sense of humor, which he indulged when the occasion permitted, by pointing with humorous stories his position on the questions of war and peace constantly arising for discussion. His early critics, thus misled as to the bent of his mind, called him frivolous. His enemies called him a buffoon. The truth is, his was the saddest, sanest, most earnest mind that ever consecrated itself to a great cause. But no mind could have borne his burdens without some mental anodyne that would bring surcease of care and sorrow. His humorous sallies constituted such an anodyne, and the sense of humor with which the Almighty had endowed him is now seen to have been a necessary part of his equipment for the superhuman task he was called on to perform.

One thing that engaged the attention of his contemporaries, and that has been of absorbing interest to succeeding generations, was the intellectual exaltation

that came to Mr. Lincoln with his responsibilities, resulting in a remarkable clarity of thought and richness of expression in his public utterances and state papers. His diction and his imagery, always marvelous, considering his opportunities, now rose to the height of Miltonic sublimity.

In his speech at Springfield, preceding the noted debates with Douglas, he gave the first evidence of this mental exaltation. He said:

"A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved, I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall be alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South."

The great issue of that day could not have been stated in fewer words, or in words that defined it more perfectly, or in words better calculated by their collocation and their majestic sweep, to arrest and engage the public attention.

In his first inaugural address, speaking to the people of the South, he made an appeal never surpassed for the beauty of its imagery and its moving and touching force. It was in these words:

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government; while I have the most solemn one to preserve, protect and defend it. I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break the bonds of affection.

"The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

After four years of bloody war, inaugurated by the South in the face of his fraternal appeal, the iron had entered his soul, and he registered his unalterable purpose to continue the struggle in the following elevated passage contained in his second inaugural:

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may soon pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until the wealth piled by the bondsmen's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid with another drawn with the sword; as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said: 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

His letter to Mrs. Bixby, who had lost five sons on the field of battle, is one of the most beautiful and pathetic things ever written in any language. But his Gettysburg address, in beauty of diction, and in the clarity of the sublime thoughts conveyed, is perhaps the most perfect of all his productions. I can only stop to quote a single paragraph:

"But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave

men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here."

This address followed one delivered by Edward Everett, and was lost to the immediate hearers in the florid splendor with which Mr. Everett had captivated their senses. But the address of Mr. Everett has been forgotten, while that of Mr. Lincoln will live, "a gem of purest ray serene," as long as the English language shall endure.

These glimpses of Lincoln, man and boy, have been sufficient, I hope, to give some insight into his great character, crystal clear on its moral side as a mountain brook, as complex and universal on the intellectual side as the ether of the universe that holds in their places the stars that stud the heavens. Humble and devout, wise and far sighted, faithful and trustworthy, courageous and resovled, he undoubtedly was. Aided by those qualities, he pursued the task to which he had been called until it had been successfully accomplished. He had the satisfaction, before the light faded from his eyes forever, of beholding the flag of the Union floating in triumph over every section of the land that he loved, and floating over a land that contained none but free men. It is doubtful if any other in the land could have achieved the task; and that fact confirms the reverent belief, often expressed, that the Almighty, in every crisis involving the establishment of the maintenance of human liberty, raises up that human instrumentality best fitted to cope with the crisis and to advance the divine principle.

When kingly prerogative threatened the established liberties of Englishmen, Cromwell emerged from obscurity to chasten with his stout heart and iron hand the devotees of arbitrary power, and to leave the indelible

and ineffaceable impress of democracy on English institutions. When the American colonies revolted against the tyranny of the Mother Country, imposed on them by king and parliament, Washington was brought to the front, an aristocrat and a slave holder, but a lover of liberty of Greek and Roman mould; a man of majestic poise, whose influence would hold the wavering resolution of his compatriots; a trained soldier, whose skill and fortitude would guide them through the perils of war to ultimate triumph, and the establishment of American nationality. When in 1860 the rage of faction and pride of power threatened to undo the work of Washington and the fathers, quite another personality was required. A man of force and resolution to hold the national power aloft, but with gentleness of heart to mitigate its severity that the bonds of amity might not be irretrievably broken; a man with the guile of much political experience, but with the ingenuous honesty of an exalted soul, to guide the storm tossed ship of state through the cross-currents of diverging and opposing views urged by its professed friends and supporters. Such an instrument was found in the person of the martyred President. He might have been expected to look forward, and doubtless did look forward, to a period of repose after his work had been done, in which to enjoy the well earned plaudits of his countrymen. But we know from contemporary history that he did not consider his work done with the cessation of hostilities. On the contrary, his mind was filled with high hopes, with generous resolves, with benignant purposes, toward the people and the section so lately in arms against the government. But alas! he was not destined to enjoy any period of repose; to see his hopes realized, his resolves entered upon, his purposes carried out. He had nearly reached the end of his pilgrimage. The gates were already ajar that were to admit him to the com-

panionship of the great and good of earth from the beginning of time. While the American people were still rejoicing over a nation redeemed, dedicated anew and in a larger sense, to the ideals of the Fathers, and acclaiming him as its savior and preserver, he was stricken down by the hand of an assassin nerved to the act by the madness of mock tragedy; the most insensate blow ever struck, viewed from the standpoint of utility to the cause then already lost; the most cruel and desolating to the anguished heart of the nation that had accompanied him in his long struggle, and was then rejoicing with him over its happy ending. As the result of his tragic death the wounds of the two sections were torn open afresh, resulting in the imposition of conditions on the prostrate people of the South never contemplated by his lofty and magnanimous soul. And thus both the people of the North and the South were chastened by the hand of a madman, to the divine end apparently that union should come, when it did come, with a better knowledge by each of the other, although after much misunderstanding and suffering, and upon terms that should make it a Union forever, one and indissoluble and indestructible. I have now come to the end. The bullet of the assassin that ended the life of Abraham Lincoln fixed the seal of immortality on his name and fame. It is not too much to say that his place is fixed in history forever as the sanest mind, the bravest heart, the gentlest soul, the most exalted spirit, to animate mortal clay, since the son of God expiated the sins of men on the cross of calvary.

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